

## Facts for Feds:

*a briefing service of the*  
**Federal Preservation Institute**  
*National Park Service*

### **TRENDS IN NOMINATION OF FEDERALLY-OWNED HISTORIC PROPERTIES TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

#### **Federal Nominations Decline from 8.6% to 3.8% of National Register Annual Listings, 1991 to 2005**

Nationwide, the trend in National Register nominations by Federal Preservation Officers is down from a high of nearly 160 listings per year in the early 1990s to less than 60 listings per year over the last five years. Since 1990 three agencies, the Forest Service, the Postal Service, and the National Park Service have combined to nominate more than 70 percent of the listed properties.

Years	National Register Nominations	Federal Nominations	Federal Nominations (percentage)
1991-1995	9164	787	8.6%
1996-2000	7688	486	6.3%
2001-2005	7587	289	3.8%
Total	24439	1552	6.4%

**Does this trend mean that Federal Preservation Officers have begun to complete their historic property inventories?** Probably not—every year more resources owned by Federal agencies become eligible for the National Register and new historic properties, especially archaeological sites, are identified through other agency activities. Given that the Federal government manages over 670 million acres of land—about one-third of the territory of the United States, Federal agency historic preservation programs play a significant role in the stewardship of our nation’s historic resources.

#### **Why must Federal Preservation Officers nominate properties to the National Register?**

Based on Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the standards for Federal historic preservation programs require that Federal Preservation Officers nominate historic properties under their jurisdiction to the National Register. This mandate recognizes the fundamental role that National Register listing has in helping an agency effectively fulfill its stewardship responsibilities. In the past, project-specific determinations of National Register eligibility worked as short-term solutions, but as agencies are increasingly called upon to account for heritage assets, such as with Executive Order 13327, National Register listing has become a more important tool for long-term stewardship.

#### **Why is this trend important?**

National Register nominations are a specific measurable program outcome that indicates an agency is actively fostering the stewardship of our nation’s historic resources. Federal Preservation Officers, especially at agencies with significant land management responsibilities, should consider how this downward trend in nominating historic properties reflects on the effectiveness of their historic preservation programs. Not only do National Register nominations provide good information for facility management and operation, it’s the law.

### What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of properties worthy of preservation. Authorized in 1966 as part of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Managed by the National Park Service, the National Register now contains 81,000 listings that include more than 1.4 million historic resources. Under federal law, National Register eligibility is the threshold for the stewardship of historic properties by federal agencies. Federal, state, and tribal preservation officers nominate, on average, about 1500 historic properties to the National Register each year.

### National Register Listings by Federal Agencies, 1991-2005

Federal Agency	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	Total
Commerce	1	0	0	1
Labor	1	0	0	1
Federal Communication Commission	0	1	0	1
Federal Deposit Insurance Commission	1	0	0	1
Housing and Urban Development	1	0	0	1
Federal Aviation Administration	0	2	0	2
Farmers Home Administration	2	0	0	2
Health and Human Services	2	0	0	2
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	0	0	2	2
United States Department of Agriculture	1	1	0	2
Tennessee Valley Authority	0	2	0	3
Bureau of Indian Affairs	2	1	1	5
Department of Energy	10	1	0	11
Department of Transportation	0	0	10	11
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	0	10	1	11
Fish and Wildlife Service	4	7	2	13
Bureau of Reclamation	8	5	6	19
U.S. Army	12	18	2	32
U.S. Air Force	25	7	3	38
General Services Administration	14	27	12	54
Corps of Engineers	26	19	10	58
U.S. Navy	40	11	4	59
Veterans Affairs	10	51	6	67
Bureau of Land Management	18	30	40	91
U.S. Coast Guard	30	3	46	94
National Park Service	141	125	43	333
U.S. Postal Service	153	109	49	344
U.S. Forest Service	285	56	52	437
Total	787	486	289	1562

*Source: National Register of Historic Places*

*For more information, send an email to [NPS\\_fpi@nps.gov](mailto:NPS_fpi@nps.gov) or call 202-354-6999.  
Federal Preservation Institute, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW (2254), Washington, D.C. 20240*

